

Division of Community Action Agencies – Sept, 2015, DHR Board Meeting

Congress has begun the process of reauthorizing the Weatherization Assistance Program and Community Services Block Grant statutes. The process will be long and states will be asked for a variety of information by Congressional offices, federal agencies, and national organizations to support the process of updating the laws.

The LIHEAP application period ended Apr. 30. Local agencies served 80,919 Iowa households (191,284 individuals) with heating assistance benefits to assist with a portion of their heating costs. The average annual household benefit was \$447, which is paid directly to the customer's utility account. Benefits are targeted to vulnerable households with low incomes and high heating costs. Nearly one-third of households assisted by LIHEAP have an elderly household member.

Propane prices have trended downward over the summer, with average prices today around \$1.02/gal. We contracted \$3.5 million in LIHEAP propane pre-purchase funds over the summer with the intent to lock in prices for next winter.

We are in the process of implementing new performance measures for the LIHEAP program year that begins Oct. 1.

The weatherization Assistance Program has successfully implemented new DOE requirements for all local agencies to have certified weatherization inspectors by April 1. Personnel must pass rigorous written and field examinations to become certified. DCAA will now turn to establishing new annual Tier One training for inspectors, as required by DOE.

The Community Services Block Grant program is implementing the new Organizational Standards for all community action agencies effective October 1. DCAA has developed a new CSBG application for local agencies to submit to DCAA, new monitoring and on-site review protocols, new requirements for the CSBG State Plan, and additional training and technical assistance strategies. New performance measures for state CSBG offices are also being finalized, with an effective date of October 1.

CSBG on-site monitoring and technical assistance is on-going during July-Sept.

DCAA staff members have been asked by the Dept of Energy and Dept of HHS to participate in national work groups to develop plans dealing with radon issues in weatherization and performance data collection for CSBG.

The FaDSS program is conducting a comprehensive review of the outcomes measures used in the program. The Outcomes Committee of the FaDSS Council has established several working groups of state and local staff to review and develop recommendations to modify program measures, assessment instruments, training, and evaluation of the FaDSS program. Staff is also spending much time on the road to perform annual on-site reviews of local programs and write monitoring reports.

FaDSS is now working with a software and program developer to begin overhaul of our FaDSS data collection system.

The Iowa Community Action Association, in partnership with DCAA conducted its Annual Training Conference "Committed to Excellence" on June 2-4.

